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Statement of the Group of 21 on a Nuclear Test Ban

The Group of 21 is extremely disappointed and fully shares the concern expressed by the international community at the decision recently taken by a nuclear-weapon State to suspend its moratorium and resume nuclear-weapon testing soon, as well as at the nuclear test recently conducted by another nuclear-weapon State. The States Parties of the NPT of G-21 are deeply concerned that such developments run counter to the decisions adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, in particular, the decision on "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament" and jeopardizes the credibility of the NPT regime. This is a serious setback to the ongoing negotiations for a Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and undermines its successful conclusion. The Group of 21 urges that a moratorium on nuclear testing should be observed by all nuclear-weapon States during the CTBT negotiations and until the entry into force of the CTBT.

Conducting or intending to conduct nuclear-weapon tests over and above the substantial number of tests already conducted, raises serious questions about the nuclear-weapon States real intentions with regard to continued development of nuclear weapons. Recent reports about discussions among the nuclear-weapon States on a threshold for a test ban have also given rise to deep concern. The Group holds that consistent with the terms of the mandate of the Ad hoc Committee on Nuclear-Test Ban, the CTBT should be an instrument against both horizontal and vertical nuclear proliferation and should effectively contribute to nuclear disarmament. To admit low yield nuclear testing or to permit testing below a certain threshold by using any technique would defeat such purposes. The Group of 21 reiterates that the CTBT should entail obligations for complete cessation of nuclear tests by all States in all environments and for all time. No tests should be allowed for any reason or justification including the so-called safety and reliability of the nuclear weapons and perfecting the techniques to further develop nuclear weapons. The ban should be comprehensive. The nuclear test-ban issue is a global issue and all its aspects should be multilaterally negotiated in the CD. In this context, the Group of 21 calls upon the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on the Nuclear Test Ban to take appropriate measures to ensure that negotiations are held for a clear understanding on the scope of the future CTBT.

The Group of 21 has already expressed its concern in its earlier working papers on the possible use of National Technical Means (NTMs) for verification purposes. The Group stresses that the NTMs should not be used on a case-by-case and selective basis. The Group also reiterates that the

Organization should have the capacity and the responsibility of analysing all data. The judgement by the Organization in this regard should be based on data received from the IMS. Moreover, it should be the exclusive responsibility of the Organization to carry out on-site inspection in areas both within and beyond the jurisdiction or control of States parties. The Group is also not convinced of the logic of any "voluntary" funding for the International Monitoring System (IMS) since the cost of the verification activities of the Organization shall be borne by the States Parties in accordance with the United Nations scale of assessment adjusted to take into account differences in membership between the United Nations and the Organization of the CTBT.

In view of the above, the Group of 21 reiterates its earlier call upon members of the Conference on Disarmament, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, for an early conclusion of a Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1995.